

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuba May Day shows resolve to defend revolution

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 82/NO. 19 MAY 14, 2018

## The ‘Militant,’ SWP books welcomed at protest actions

BY DAN FEIN

DENVER — “I’m interested in a fighting labor movement. These books and your newspaper look like they point the way,” Eddie Asher told Socialist Workers Party member Jacque Henderson at the thousands-

### SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY SPRING DRIVES

strong rally of teachers, school workers, bus drivers and their supporters here April 27. Asher subscribed to the *Militant* for a year and got *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, both by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

Barbara Stein, a retired teacher, also came by the literature table we set up at the rally. “I don’t think we live in a democracy, the rich run the

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## Korea talks show prospects for nuclear-free peninsula

BY TERRY EVANS

Kim Jong Un, the leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the North, met South Korean President Moon Jae-in April 27, the first summit between leaders of the two countries since 2007. The meeting — and more to come — are the result of initiatives by North Korea’s leaders.

The discussion is a step toward a meeting between Kim and President Donald Trump, tentatively set for late May or early June. On the table are moves toward denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. At the same time, the U.S. rulers continue to apply draconian economic sanctions that hit working people in North Korea the hardest.

The two Korean leaders met at Panmunjom, in the “demilitarized zone” separating the two countries — a boundary that was imposed by Wash-

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## Teacher battles: Example for all working people!



Militant

Thousands of teachers, supporters march in Phoenix April 30, demand funds, raises, respect.

### Workers are starting to act up today. Join in!

The strikes and protests by teachers and other school workers from West Virginia to Oklahoma, Kentucky, Colorado, Arizona and now North Carolina is something new. We have

### EDITORIAL

not seen a working-class fight like this in decades.

“It’s a class of people rising up,” one of the teachers in Morgantown, West Virginia, said. After decades of

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### Arizona teachers, school workers get broad solidarity

BY BERNIE SENTER

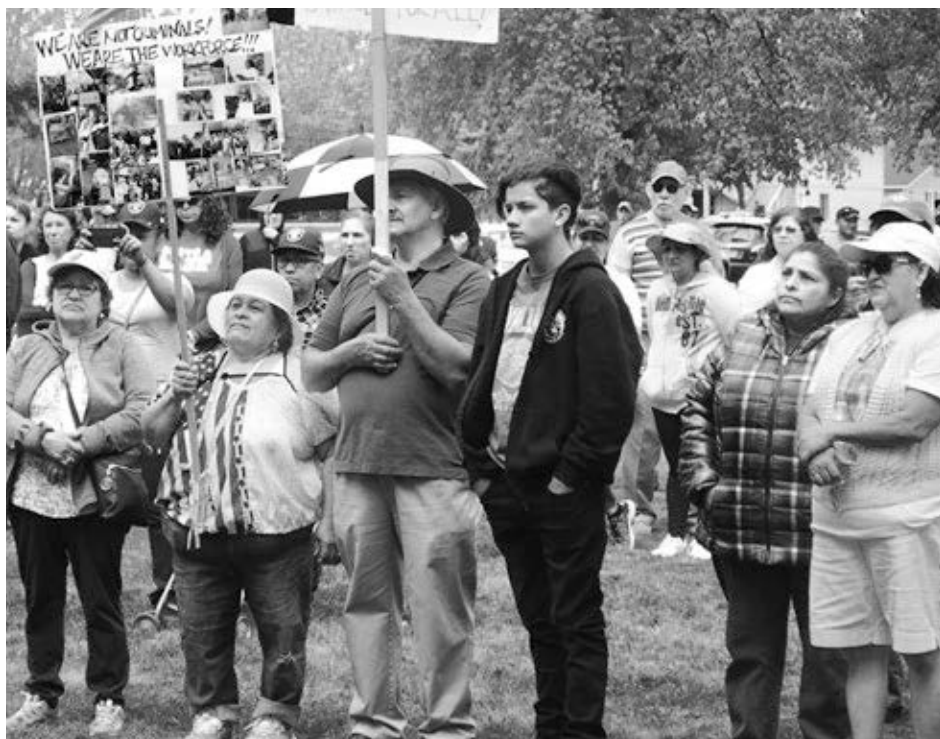
PHOENIX — A sea of people in red T-shirts flowed down the streets here April 26, the first day of a state-wide walkout by teachers and other school workers in Arizona. More than 50,000 marched and rallied at the state Capitol, demanding more funds for schools along with raises for teachers and all school personnel.

As the walkouts and protests continued, large crowds have turned out day after day here and in actions across the state. And the confidence

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## Thousands march on May Day, demanding, ‘No deportations!’

Socialist Workers Party says: ‘Amnesty now!’



Militant/Clay Dennison

Farmworkers, unionists and others joined May Day action in Yakima, Washington, May 1.

BY SETH GALINSKY

“We are not criminals, we are the workforce,” said the sign Maria Cuevas carried at this year’s May 1 International Workers Day march in Yakima, Washington. Underneath she pasted nearly two dozen photos of immigrant workers picking crops, driving tractors and at other jobs.

Some 300 people — mostly farmworkers, including a contingent from

the United Farm Workers Union, and workers in food processing plants — joined the march. Yakima is a major agricultural center in Washington state.

Similar protests took place across the country, supporting the rights of immigrants, opposing deportations and demanding protection for those in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

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## Rap artist Meek Mill freed — case exposes US criminal ‘justice’ system

BY JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA — Meek Mill, an internationally known African-American rap artist, was released on bail from the state penitentiary in Chester April 24. Upon hearing the rumor he would be freed, hundreds gathered outside the prison, including nearby neighbors, some holding “Free Meek Mill” signs.

Mill, 30, had been in prison since November 2017, thrown back behind bars on accusations of probation violations related to a conviction when he was 19. In 2008 he was jailed for eight months and then put on probation for five years after Philadelphia cops stopped him on the way to a store, beat him and framed him up on charges of possessing drugs and a weapon.

Mill has been repeatedly arrested and dragged into court by Common Pleas Court Judge Genece Brinkley for alleged probation violations over

the last 10 years. In November she sentenced him to another two to four years, against the recommendations of both city prosecutors and Mill’s pa-

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### Inside

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After nearly 45 years Herman Bell released from prison 4

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

‘Hardhat Mass’ marks deaths of construction workers

New Zealand nurses reject contract, protest work conditions



# Prospects for nuclear-free Korea

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ington, with the complicity of Moscow, when they tore the country in half in 1945. Kim and Moon agreed to press Beijing and Washington to join in reaching a treaty finally declaring an end to the 1950-53 Korean War.

The U.S. imperialist rulers crushed a rebellion by workers and peasants in the southern part of the country in 1949 and imposed a pro-U.S. dictatorship there. They invaded the North, seeking to restore the rule of the capitalists and landlords. A popular uprising had swept the North and established a workers and farmers government. Some 4 million people were killed in the war.

The U.S. rulers failed to accomplish their goals. North Korean forces, aided by Chinese volunteers, pushed the invading army back to the 38th parallel. Since then, every U.S. administration has refused to sign a peace treaty.

Kim and Moon also agreed to re-establish reunion programs — suspended in 2015 — for Koreans with families living on different sides of the border. The South Korean government says 57,920 people living in the South have relatives in the North with no way to see them.

In their joint declaration both government heads repeated what they have said for decades — that they favor the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The capitalist rulers in the South place their country under Washington’s “nuclear umbrella,” which deploys nuclear-armed submarines in nearby waters to defend U.S. imperialist interests. Washington also deploys 28,500 troops in South Korea and maintained nuclear weapons there through 1991.

For its part, the North Korean government’s decision to develop and test nu-

clear weapons, and its threats to destroy Seoul in a “sea of fire,” has weakened its capacity to win support from working people in South Korea, Japan and elsewhere against attacks by Washington.

After the summit, South Korean officials reported Kim said the North would abandon its nuclear weapons if Washington pledged not to invade. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo reiterated the U.S. rulers’ demand for an immediate, verifiable and “irreversible” end to North Korea’s nuclear weapons program April 29, while saying nothing about Washington’s massive nuclear arsenal.

An April 13 message by Steve Clark for the Socialist Workers Party to the DPRK welcomes the “recent steps that have opened the road to agreement by Seoul, Beijing and Washington to sit down at the table with the DPRK for talks.” The SWP demands the U.S. government “sign a peace treaty ending the murderous war the U.S. imperialist rulers inflicted on the Korean people” and get its “troops, ships, planes, and missile and radar systems out of Korea! For a Korean Peninsula, Japan and surrounding skies and waters free of nuclear weapons!”

### Sanctions punish working people

The summit declaration made no mention of the impact on working people of years of sanctions imposed on North Korea by the U.S. rulers and their allies at the United Nations. The combination of tightening sanctions, and the Chinese rulers’ decision to step up their enforcement of these punitive measures, has increased the hardship working people in the DPRK confront, especially in rural areas. This includes factory and mine closures, and food,



Korea Rail Network Authority

**High speed train on Honam line, South Korea. During summit, leaders of North and South Korea discussed connecting and modernizing rail system across peninsula. Pyongyang seeks economic growth, end of U.S. rulers’ sanctions, war threat in talks on denuclearization.**

medicine and fuel shortages. The governments of the U.S., U.K., Australia and Canada, as well as Japan, are collaborating on monitoring any DPRK attempt to get around the restrictions.

Kim and Moon’s joint summit declaration urges “steps towards the connection and modernization of the railways and roads ... between Seoul and Sinuiju,” a city that lies on North Korea’s border with China. Such infrastructure development across the peninsula would only be possible if there was an easing of sanctions imposed on the North.

On April 21 Kim announced that his government was shifting its strategy from simultaneously pursuing nuclear weapons and economic growth to concentrate solely on building the country’s economy.

The liberal press barons in the U.S. — whose lust to bring down President Trump determines all their “reporting”

— had previously sought to paint the administration’s course towards North Korea as bellicose. Now they claim he is dangerously naive. Nicholas Eberstadt argues in the *New York Times* that the U.S. government is being duped by what he calls Pyongyang’s “phony peace ploy.” To bolster his claim, Eberstadt falsely portrays the North Korean government, not Washington, as the aggressor in the 1950-53 war.

Blinded by their furor against Trump — and the millions of workers who voted for him — these media moguls cannot accept that his administration is winning support as a peace president.

The lessening of military tensions in the region and an end to the sanctions would create better conditions for advancing the struggles of working people in the area. And advance efforts to reunify the country.

## THE MILITANT

### Solidarity with Syrian workers, farmers, Kurds

*Devastation from multiple wars in Syria are a product of competition between rival powers — Washington, Moscow, Tehran, Tel Aviv and other capitalist regimes in the region. The ‘Militant’ explains the mounting toll of the rulers’ conflicts falls most heavily on the working class.*



Reuters/Bassam Khabieh  
Douma, near Damascus, Syria, following siege and bombing by Assad government.

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### Coming soon!

## New MILITANT website

*By the end of May themilitant.com will have its up-graded website in place, offering easier access to the paper’s coverage of working-class politics that goes back to 1928 as well as letting readers subscribe online.*

## The Militant

Vol. 82/No. 19

Closing news date: May 3, 2018

Editor: John Studer

**Editorial volunteers:** Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Ellie García, Emma Johnson, Martín Koppel, Carole Lesnick, Jacob Perasso, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in September, one week in December.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.  
**Telephone:** (212) 244-4899  
**Fax:** (212) 244-4947

**E-mail:** [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com)

**Website:** [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant’s* views. These are expressed in editorials.



‘Militant,’ books welcomed

Continued from front page government. I’m more for a socialist democracy,” she said.

“We look to the Cuban Revolution as an example for workers to follow,” Henderson said. Stein picked up an introductory subscription.

We joined in the rallies at the state Capitol April 26 and 27, and traveled to nearby cities and towns to knock on workers’ doors and talk about the teachers’ battles across the country and introduce the party, the *Militant* and the books the party is campaigning with. Twenty-three subscriptions were sold at the rallies along with 16 books. In addition, over 65 single copies of the *Militant* were sold and \$62 donated to the Militant Fighting Fund.

The SWP and supporters of the *Militant* are going into the sixth week of an eight-week spring drive to sell 1,400 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 1,400 books by party leaders by May 22. And the *Militant* is simultaneously working to raise \$112,000 toward its annual operating expenses.

In Wheat Ridge, a working-class suburb, carpet layer Edward Gonzales told Henderson and Edwin Fruit that he had strong opinions about how the U.S. rulers treat veterans of their wars abroad. “It’s us and our kids that fight all those wars,” Gonzales said. “When we come home, they say ‘thanks,’ but they have no use for us — no jobs, no programs.” He got a subscription and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*. All five books on special are listed in the ad below.

Christina Ortega and her husband Isidro got into a serious discussion with Horace Kerr, Henderson and myself

on their doorstep in Pueblo. They live near the giant steel mill now named EVRAZ Rocky Mountain Steel, which today employs only a few dozen production workers. Christina has been a school bus driver for 22 years. Isidro is a welder and a member of the Boilermakers union. Their daughter just quit her job at Walmart to go to school in Greeley, where she got a job at the meatpacking plant there.

The mill used to be part of a Rockefeller family-run conglomerate named Colorado Fuel and Iron Corp., which had the government in its back pocket for decades as it fought workers. It was responsible for the Ludlow Massacre in 1914, where dozens of miners and their families were mowed down by the National Guard armed with machine guns and rifles, who then burned down their camp.

Christina Ortega told us about one time she forgot to pay her utility bill. “Black Hills Energy cut off my electricity and then charged me \$700 to turn on the lights again!” she said.

“I really appreciate what your party is doing,” Isidro Ortega said. They got a subscription for Christina’s mother, who’s a retired schoolteacher, and a copy of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* for themselves.

Joe Swanson from Lincoln, Nebraska, writes, “Three working rail workers subscribed to the *Militant* last week and a rail worker contributed \$10 to the Militant Fighting Fund.” Supporters there have raised their *Militant* subscription quota by 25 percent.

Arizona school workers walk out

A number of other SWP units have raised their goals, especially in places where members have been participating in teachers’ battles — West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma and now Colorado and Arizona. Teachers began a walk-out in Arizona April 26. Socialist campaigners joined statewide rallies in Phoenix that day and the next, and also went door to door in working-class neighborhoods in the “copper corridor” of mines and smelters in southeast Arizona.

“We knocked on work-



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Campaigning for SWP April 28 in Pueblo, Colorado, Horace Kerr, left, and Dan Fein, right, discussed the teachers’ battles and the party with Christina and Isidro Ortega. She is a school bus driver, he is a welder. They got *Militant* subscription and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*

ers’ doors in Sahuarita, April 28, near two copper mines,” Maggie Trowe told the *Militant*. “It gave us a real feel for the social movement the teachers’ struggle is, how many teachers are stepping into political activity for the first time in their lives and finding it both exhilarating and frightening. And how there is a rolling discussion on the fight going on among workers everywhere.

“Workers support the teachers in their fight for a raise,” she said, “but also for championing school funding and their efforts to organize meals for the children of working parents.”

“I hope the teachers will stay out on strike until they win their demands,

not compromise or go back for some promises of the perspective of getting a raise from some ballot measure months from now,” Veronica Vironet, a former teacher, now a school counselor and mother of three in Tucson, Arizona, said. “It was a slap in the face that the legislature went home in the middle of Friday’s rally.” She subscribed to the *Militant*.

The teachers’ rebellion continued April 30 with thousands mobilized in Phoenix and others staffing schools and additional places to provide food and shelter for students of working parents.

“I didn’t even know there was a teachers union until this started happening,” Heather Covitz, an English teacher from Chandler, Arizona, told Bev Bernardo at the rally outside the Capitol. “I joined last week.” And now she found out about the Socialist Workers Party, getting a subscription, *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?*

So far, the team of socialist campaigners has sold 77 subscriptions and 55 of the books by SWP leaders.

To join SWP members and supporters in expanding the reach of the party, the *Militant* and the books, contact the SWP branch nearest you, listed on page 8.



Militant

Socialist Workers Party member Norton Sandler, left, campaigns at May 1 rally at state Capitol in Phoenix.

Campaign to expand reach of  
‘Militant,’ books, fund  
March 24–May 22 (week five)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Received
UNITED STATES						
Albany*	95	72	95	47	\$5,400	\$2,775
Atlanta	90	41	90	25	\$9,700	\$2,930
Chicago*	120	88	120	71	\$11,500	\$5,484
Dallas*	50	38	40	25	\$1,900	\$675
Lincoln*	25	19	20	14	\$300	\$222
Los Angeles	125	112	125	85	\$10,000	\$4,974
Miami	35	19	35	18	\$3,200	\$2,118
New York	165	119	165	80	\$16,700	\$7,192
Oakland	85	57	85	43	\$13,000	\$8,669
Philadelphia	65	59	65	30	\$3,600	\$825
Seattle	95	77	95	35	\$7,900	\$4,575
Twin Cities*	85	54	85	37	\$4,500	\$1,054
Washington	70	52	70	30	\$7,500	\$4,494
Total U.S.	1,105	807	1,090	540	\$95,200	\$45,987
Prisoners	25	19				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	70	53	70	41	\$2,500	\$1,030
Manchester	50	38	50	17	\$950	\$230
Total U.K.	120	91	120	58	\$3,450	\$1,260
CANADA						
Montreal	60	42	60	38	\$5,700	\$3,175
Vancouver	45	31	45	23	\$3,000	\$1,548
Total Canada	105	73	105	61	\$8,700	\$4,723
NEW ZEALAND						
	45	34	45	22	\$4,000	\$2,178
AUSTRALIA						
	40	27	40	12	\$800	\$625
FRANCE						
					500	120
Other						
						500
Total	1,440	1,051	1,400	693	\$112,650	\$55,393
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To subscribe or purchase books at these prices,  
contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8



# South Africa workers strike, protest for wage raise, rights

BY VED DOOKHUN

Tens of thousands of workers joined in a one-day strike and protests in cities and rural areas across South Africa April 25 called by the South African Federation of Trade Unions. They demanded a significant raise in the African National Congress-led government's proposal to set the national minimum wage at 20 rand an hour (\$1.61) and opposed new legislation aimed at restricting workers' constitutional right to strike.

The wage bill sets even lower minimum wages for farmworkers, who would receive 18 rand per hour; domestic workers, 15 rand; and those on extended public works programs, 11 rand an hour. Farmworkers and domestic workers would not get the new rates until 2020.

The proposal is being pushed by Cyril Ramaphosa, the new South African president, who says it will help reduce wage inequality. But even his official spokesman Khusela Diko admits, "The president recognizes that the national minimum wage is not a living wage."

This was the first national strike and protest called by the South African Federation of Trade Unions, a newly formed organization with a membership of 800,000 and 30 affiliated unions. It broke away last year from the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the ANC-aligned labor federation. Cosatu and its affiliates opposed the actions.

Ramaphosa, originally trained as a lawyer, had been head of the National Union of Miners and a central leader of the ANC before he left politics in 1997 and became a wealthy business and banking magnate. He has said his goal is to make South African capitalism work.

The South African Federation of Trade Unions describes the proposed minimum wage as a "poverty wage." It is demanding a minimum monthly pay of 12,500 rand, about \$1,000, a demand first raised by platinum miners who went on strike in 2012.

"This comes from the miners at Mari-kana who raised this as a perfectly rea-

sonable living wage," Patrick Craven, national spokesperson for the union federation, said in a phone interview. He was referring to the 2012 strike by platinum miners at the Lonmin mine where 34 miners were massacred by the police. "Miners died demanding a living wage," he added.

Ramaphosa was a company director at Lonmin when the strike and killings took place.

The city center of Johannesburg was brought to a standstill by several thousand workers in a sea of red shirts marching by government buildings. Demonstrations also took place in Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and Polokwane, as well as in rural areas. Several hundred farmworkers marched in Robertson in the Western Cape protesting the special "poverty" wage proposed for them and against conditions in the wine industry.

The strike comes as the official unemployment rate reached 27.7 percent, and nearly 6 million workers don't have jobs. The government increased the sales tax from 14 to 15 percent, the first time it has been raised since 1993, and raised the price of fuel.

The proposed laws would mean workers would have to meet more onerous conditions before going on strike.

The bills were scheduled to be implemented by May 1, but have been sent back to the labor ministry for redrafting.

## May Day Brigade does volunteer work on Cuba's farms



Militant

CAIMITO, Cuba — Some 290 participants in the 13th May Day International Brigade to Cuba are meeting with workers, farmers, youth, and representatives of the country's mass organizations, and learning firsthand about the revolution here.

The April 22-May 6 brigade, organized by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), includes workers, students and others from 31 countries. The largest contingent is from the U.S., with 74 brigadistas.

As part of our activities, participants are doing volunteer work alongside farmers in their fields in Havana and Camagüey provinces. On the joint Cuba-Mexico Friendship Cooperative, in Alquizar, 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Havana, pictured above, brigadistas sorted tarron root and sweet potatoes. In Camagüey, brigade members paired with high school students to spread fertilizer on a large organic farm that grows leaf vegetables.

We also visited and exchanged views with workers in a pharmaceutical plant active in developing vaccines for hepatitis and other diseases.

Brigade members joined the mass mobilization in Havana on May Day and attended an international solidarity conference the day after to discuss how to step up efforts in the United States and other countries to end the 57-year U.S. economic war against Cuba's socialist revolution and the U.S. occupation of Cuban territory at Guantánamo Bay.

— OSBORNE HART

## After nearly 45 years Herman Bell released from prison

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a victory for political rights, former Black Panther Herman Bell was released from Shawangunk Correctional Facility in Wallkill, New York, April 27 after spending nearly 45 years behind bars.

Bell was freed despite furious opposition and a media blitz by the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association. The cop association went to court to prevent his release, but State Supreme Court Judge Richard Kowee ruled against them. The parole

board decision "was not irrational," he said. "Nor did it border on impropriety. Therefore, it must be upheld."

The cops vowed to continue efforts to have him thrown back behind bars. A full panel of appellate judges May 4 will hear another motion filed by the PBA.

The issue has been played up big in the media since March 13 when Bell was granted parole at his eighth hearing before the board.

Bell, 70, was convicted in 1973, along with Albert Washington and Jalil

Muntaqim (born Anthony Bottom), in the 1971 killing of two New York City police officers. They each got a sentence of 25 years to life. Washington died in prison in 2000. Muntaqim is scheduled to appear before the parole board in June.

During Bell's decades in prison he served as a mentor for young prisoners, the FreeHermanBell.org website says, on issues "including Black History, English grammar and writing skills" so they could "claim the pride, dignity and responsibility that comes with their knowledge." While in prison he earned bachelor's degrees in psychology and sociology and a master's in sociology.

In the days before Bell's release, the PBA claimed 367,000 online letters had flooded the parole board opposing his release, trying to make their moves against him look like a popular groundswell. This was played up in an editorial in the *New York Post* attacking Bell and by the *Daily News*.

But it turns out "the huge number of letters was automatically generated by fewer than 6,000 individual complaints made via the NYC PBA website," reported Intercept, an online news site. "A spokesperson for the NYC PBA confirmed that."

Several politicians backed the PBA campaign. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio wrote the parole board to urge them to reverse its decision. Gov. Andrew Cuomo told the media that he opposed granting Bell freedom.

Support for Bell's release included the son of one of the slain cops, whose letter to the parole board helped impact its decision.

Bell walked out of the prison shortly after 5 p.m. and returned to Brooklyn.

## Cuba May Day shows resolve to defend revolution

BY OSBORNE HART

HAVANA — Hundreds of thousands of Cubans marched here May 1, expressing their ongoing support and determination to advance Cuba's socialist revolution. Contingents of trade unionists and members of the mass organizations of women, youth and others paraded past the reviewing stand, celebrating the May Day international working-class holiday.

Members of the 13th May Day International Brigade — some 290 people from 31 countries — joined the throngs in Revolutionary Square. Similar mobilizations were held in Santiago, San José and elsewhere.

"What impressed me was the different organizations of workers walking by together," Samantha Hamlin told the *Militant*. From Knoxville, Tennessee, Hamlin is one of the 74 U.S. participants on the brigade.

"Their enthusiasm, all there in the square together — I have never seen that type of passion, that type of parade of proud workers," she said.



Militant/Jeff Powers

Hundreds of thousands joined International Workers Day mobilization in Havana, May 1.

The mobilization is "an expression of the historic legacy of struggle that makes us proud to be Cubans," Ulises Guilarte, general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), told the crowd.

"It was exciting to see so many people celebrating a holiday for workers," said Chris Brook, one of the 27 young trade unionists on a brigade from the United Kingdom. Brook works at Asda, a chain of supermarkets owned by Walmart.



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today — from school workers in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona and Colorado, to retail and factory workers looking to stand up and fight. Send in articles, photos and letters on picket lines and other labor protests to [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com) or mail them to: 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018; or call us at (212) 244-4899.

## New Zealand nurses reject contract, protest work conditions

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Hundreds of nurses and other health care workers joined protests outside hospitals and clinics across New Zealand over two weeks starting April 9. They are demanding increased staffing, higher wages and an end to onerous working hours.

The actions underlined the workers' rejection of the latest contract offer by New Zealand's district health boards. Some 27,000 nurses, health care assistants and midwives are represented by their union, the New Zealand Nurses Organisation.

The rejected offer included a 2 percent wage increase and a 1,050 New Zealand dollars (\$735) contract-signing bonus. A district health board spokesperson claimed that given the budget squeeze across the country's health system, their offer was "right at the limits of affordability."

Some 200 workers and supporters rallied outside Middlemore Hospital in South Auckland April 10. Banging on their union placards, they chanted, "Be fair, be fair, be fair to those who care." Many passersby tooted their horns in solidarity.

"It's not about the money so much as patient safety," William Mai, who works as a health care assistant at Auckland City Hospital, told the *Militant*. "We just don't have the staff to look after the patients." Nurses launched a Facebook page, titled "New Zealand, please hear our voice." Thousands have logged on to describe the problems they face from long hours to lack of respect from management.

At a 150-strong picket outside Christchurch Hospital, Nurse Sam Stott told the press April 13 that many of them face the extra financial burden of paying off student loans. Her debt totals NZ\$39,000, she said.

"A lot of nurses want to strike. We won't get what we need behind closed doors," nurse Sala Ika told the *Militant* at the Middlemore action.

Over the next month starting April 23 the workers are voting by mail whether to authorize union leaders to prepare strike action. Under a New Zealand law restricting workers' rights who labor in what they call "essential occupations," any such strike would require 14 days notice, postponing such action until July at the earliest.

A strike proposal will depend in part

on the recommendations of a panel appointed March 12 by the Labour Party-led government to address the "impasse" in the dispute. Representatives of the union, employers and government will take part in the body.

"For us the main thing is the recognition of our work condition and standard of nursing," said Yvonne McKenzie, a nurse who has worked at Middlemore for 12 years in the area of Maori health. "We are in the poorest community and the bucks don't seem to roll this way."

"The moldy buildings need to be fixed," she added. Many of the hospital's buildings are badly damaged due to lack of maintenance.

— Patrick Brown

## Contract teachers at Canada's York University strike over jobs

TORONTO — For the second time in three years, some 3,000 York University teaching assistants, contract faculty and graduate assistants, members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3903, went on strike March 5 for higher wages and job security.

"Contract faculty are required to sign new contracts for each semester, so we aren't assured a job," instructor Abdul Sawas told the *Militant* on the picket line April 23. Sawas, who is from Syria, teaches engineering. He is in Canada on a student visa.

The majority of university instructors in Canada don't have job security. Only 16,000 out of some 46,000 were full time last year. The rest are TAs, contract professors or casual instructors.

Striker Kim Sauder, who teaches Critical Disability Studies, said that the TAs are getting support from many students. "We have been explaining that our precarious working conditions affect their learning conditions," she said.

The university administration claims that 55 percent of classes taught by full-

## 'Hardhat Mass' marks deaths of construction workers



Count Me In

NEW YORK — Hundreds of construction workers from across the city gathered after work outside St. Patrick's Cathedral to attend the 10th annual "Hardhat Mass" on Workers Memorial Day April 26. They were commemorating the lives of 19 construction workers killed on worksites here over the last year. Hardhats for each of them were placed on chairs at the service along with a rose. Still wearing their own hardhats, workers marched into the cathedral.

Events to mark Workers Memorial Day were organized by trade unions around the country.

Presiding over the New York Mass, Father Brian Jordan said that 166 workers have been killed on construction sites in the decade since the first mass to mark the deaths was held.

This includes 46 workers on union-organized sites and 116 nonunion workers. "All the deceased are remembered regardless of their status," Jordan said. "We emphasize the dignity of each human person in the construction industry." Those killed were "disproportionately likely to be immigrants and low-wage workers," he said, and mostly undocumented.

The rising number of deaths in the industry is a consequence of the construction bosses' profit-driven assaults on all workers, union and nonunion. This includes attacks on wages, speedup and disregard for safety.

One of those commemorated, Edgar Pazmino, 35, was killed March 13 on a construction site in Queens that was shut down four times for safety violations in 2017 by city authorities. The bosses there owe over \$67,000 in fines, a small price for them to pay to continue profiting from conditions and speedup that endanger workers' lives.

The ongoing deaths highlight the need for workers to build fighting unions that can organize and unite all construction workers to win workers control over production conditions and safety.

— TERRY EVANS

time professors have continued to meet during the strike. But that's misleading, Sauder said, because 60 percent of the teaching at York is done by TAs.

Under provincial law, the Ontario Ministry of Labour has now appointed an "industrial investigator," who has three weeks to look into the dispute and

report back to the labor minister.

Most strikers said they still expect to sign a new contract. But last November 12,000 Ontario College teachers were forced back to work with strikebreaking legislation by the Liberal government.

— Tony DiFelice and Richard De Gaetano

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 17, 1993

KAYENTA, Navajo Reservation, Arizona — United Mine Workers of America Local 1924 president Eugenie Bodonie told the *Militant* that the local's membership voted unanimously to give eastern coal miners "full support in the BCOA [Bituminous Coal Operators Association] negotiations, even if it means going on strike."

The February 9 vote took place in three local shift meetings attended by more than 300 members, some 80 percent of the union, Bodonie said.

"Whatever they'll do back east they'll try to do to us in the future," Bodonie explained. "This is the first year of our five-year contract. We are protecting ourselves from what Peabody will do four years down the road." Peabody mines east of the Mississippi River were the target of the February strike. The massive Kayenta strip mine is Peabody's largest mine in the West.



May 17, 1968

Last month Oakland, Calif., police murdered one member of the Black Panther Party and wounded two others. Now the cops have been exonerated and eight Black Panther party members have been indicted on a trumped-up charge of "attempted murder." Once again the victim becomes the "criminal" and the criminal the victim.

The eight Panthers were indicted April 25 on charges of attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon. The indictment grew out of the April 6 confrontation where the police killed Panther treasurer Bobby Hutton, 18.

The Alameda County grand jury which indicted the eight Panthers asserted the cops acted "lawfully" when they shot Hutton because, they claim, "he did not heed commands to halt."

The cops did not order Hutton to "halt" but told him to run to a squad car. As he was running, the cops shot him.



May 15, 1943

May 10 marked the tenth anniversary of the infamous book-burning night when the Nazi party "cleansed" German culture of "subversive" literature, including the works of Leon Trotsky. The Nazis and their capitalist masters hoped that the burning of liberal and Marxist literature would remove all anti-capitalist thoughts from the minds of the workers.

What the Nazis failed to understand was that the workers' struggles against capitalism were not primarily the product of written words, but the bankruptcy of the system itself. So long as the root cause of poverty, unemployment and war remains, the workers will continue to fight for their right to peace and bread — despite bonfire fed by "subversive literature."

The burning of "dangerous thoughts" cannot prop up this capitalist system and its terror, hunger, and bloodshed.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



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# Teacher battles: Example for all working people!

Continued from front page and fighting spirit of participants have grown.

The RedForEd Spirit Band, playing brass and drums, led a mighty chorus in singing, “We’re not going to take it any more.” The Twisted Sisters tune has become the signature of the school workers’ mobilizations across the country.

“I’m here because of a decade of the government cutting education,” said Matthew Martin, 28, a social studies teacher at South Mountain High School here. “There has to be a stopping point.”

More than 100,000 school workers walked out April 26, closing some 1,000 schools, affecting 850,000 students, roughly 75 percent of the state’s enrollment. The protesters are renowned for their creative signs, such as “35 is a speed limit, not a class size.”

Those who couldn’t make it to the Capitol rallied in cities across the state. While 30 teachers from Sierra Vista, close to the Mexican border, traveled to Phoenix, school workers and supporters gathered at that city’s Veterans Memorial Park, wearing red and waving signs. Kearny, in the copper triangle in the southeast where Asarco’s Ray copper mine is located,

and Flagstaff in the north were among the cities where actions took place. Some of the marchers had T-shirts sporting “Red for Ed on the Rez,” and demonstrations were organized on the state’s sizable Navajo, Apache and Hopi reservations.

## Deplorable conditions

The school workers strikes and mobilizations, which started in West Virginia in late February and continued in Oklahoma and Kentucky, have now moved into Arizona and Colorado and will hit North Carolina May 16. The North Carolina Association of Educators, the state affiliate of the National Education Association union, has called a statewide protest at the Capitol. These fights have shone the spotlight on some of the truly deplorable conditions working people face.

Lights are out in the schools, heat isn’t on in the hallways, pipes are leaking, textbooks — when teachers have them — are falling apart and there are up to 40 students in a classroom. Teachers pay hundreds, sometimes \$1,000, out of pocket for supplies, clothes for kids, even food. In Oklahoma, 20 percent of the schools work on four-days-a-week schedules.

The fact is the propertied rulers don’t care if schools are crumbling. Their kids go to private academies and Ivy League schools to learn to be rich. Workers, they’re convinced, don’t need much learning. As a matter of fact, they think literate and cultured workers are dangerous.

“We need funding,” said Yvanna Villa, a kindergarten teacher at Red Bird Elementary School here. “When I left for the walk-out, everything in my classroom except desks, tables and chairs are things I provided.”

Workers in Arizona demand a 20 percent pay raise for teachers, raises for all other school workers and restoration of funding to its 2008 level, which would require an additional \$1 billion. Median pay for Arizona teachers is one of the

## Denver rallies demand school funding, pay raises



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

DENVER — Teachers, school workers and their supporters rallied outside the state Capitol here April 27. Some 10,000 turned out to demand more funding for public schools, higher wages and to oppose efforts by legislators to cut their pensions. The action followed a rally of 2,500 the previous day.

“I am here to protest economic inequality. It has reached the tipping point,” Ryan Bauer, a sixth-grade science teacher, told the *Militant*. “We need an economy that serves everyone, not just the wealthy.”

One popular sign caught this sentiment, saying, “A teachers place is in the resistance.” It had a picture of Rosie the Riveter along with the symbol of the resistance movement against the empire from the Star Wars movies.

East High School teachers organized a feeder march from their school and were cheered when they arrived. Teachers from the Pueblo Education Association were a prominent contingent at the rally. They recently voted to strike over school funding and wages.

“We don’t live in a democracy,” Barbara Stein, who taught sociology before retiring, told the *Militant*. “The Democrats and Republicans don’t represent us.” — DAN FEIN

lowest in the country.

“It’s hard to meet their needs, when there are 32 students in the classroom. I feel spread thin. I don’t have pencils, paper, I have to buy them,” said Nancy Neff who teaches eighth-graders. “I joined my union. I’m hoping it grows in power and right to work goes away.”

Arizona is one of 28 right-to-work states, as are North Carolina, Oklahoma, Kentucky and West Virginia. The state legislature sets pay levels and benefits. Alabama, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Dakota and Utah are other states with the same setup.

In addition to demanding increased

school funding and wages, protests have targeted pension cuts and rising health premiums.

## ‘Build the union back up’

Arizona Educators United, a Facebook-based group for all those who work in the schools, started up in early March. It now has 52,000 members and has led the mobilizations. They’ve built a network of “liaisons” in schools across the state and work together with the Arizona Education Association, the largest union for school workers.

Union and nonunion workers from public schools and some charter schools have been drawn into the

growing movement. They’ve joined discussions and actions, which culminated April 11 with more than 100,000 participating in walk-ins at over 1,000 schools. They took part in the April 17-19 vote that decided to walk out, where some 57,000 workers cast their votes with 78 percent in favor.

“The union is only good as far as it reaches,” said one-year teacher Sibel Duzenli from Tucson. “I want to join and be part of building that back up.”

State legislators have tried to divide the workers. Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey has proposed a 20 percent pay raise for the teachers, making no mention of raises for other workers, or of any funding to improve school conditions.

Crystal Butler has worked as an instructional assistant for two years. She makes \$10.50 an hour and works only 30 to 32 hours a week. “The governor’s proposal only covers classroom teachers and not support staff. I work in the reading lab so I wouldn’t get the raise,” she said. The only way she and others got increased pay was after a state referendum was passed that raised the minimum wage from \$10.01 to \$10.50. Like many other workers hoping for change, she voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

In Arizona the bosses’ familiar tactic of red-baiting has reared its head. In an April 25 opinion piece in the *Arizona Republic*, Maria Syms, a statehouse representative, railed at Noah Karvelis, a leader of Arizona Educators United, saying he was “channeling Lenin” to push “a national socialist revolution.” Her evidence? He campaigned for Bernie Sanders and says that “we must continue our fight and bolster the working class.”

Karvelis spoke at the April 30 rally. “We are going to come away with a win,” he said. “We are changing history.”

## Broad support, social movement

The protests and walkouts have inspired workers and mobilized broad support across the country. Workers are hungry for a fight after decades of being pushed back by Democrats and Republicans in the White House and state legislatures.

Some 15 members of the United Association Local 469, which organizes

plumbers and pipefitters, brought 11,000 water bottles to the rally here, helping participants get some relief from the 100-degree heat. Trevor Derry, one of 30 members from the United Food and Commercial Workers, who work at area supermarkets, spent most of the day at the Capitol. He said he thought the school workers “knocked it out of the park.”

“Welcome to the labor movement, brothers and sisters,” Jim McCloughlin, president of UFCW Local 99, said when he spoke at the rally April 30.

The organization of the walkout as a broad social movement helps win solidarity and cuts across attempts to divide and defuse. Taking the lead from West Virginia, school workers have reached out to involve students, parents and other workers in the fight. Volunteers are gathering food for the many students who depend on school meals. Churches, community centers and families open their doors to students so their parents don’t have to miss work.

## W.Va. workers proud of victory of teachers strike there

BY NED MEASEL

BLACKSVILLE, W.Va. — A team of Socialist Workers Party members and supporters returned to the coal mining region in West Virginia April 27-30 to speak with miners and other workers the party had met during the recent school workers strike and to get to know others in the area. We found workers’ spirits buoyed by the experience of the strike victory, and from more hiring in the coal, gas, oil and related industries. “Now Hiring” signs are visible all around.

Support for the teachers and other school workers is nearly universal among working people. Many we met were downright proud of what was accomplished. And we found that many had a tradition of fighting.

We met with Derrick Conaway, a 27-year-old worker, and his mother Deborah around their kitchen table here. Derrick met SWP members a few weeks ago when they knocked on his door, and he got an issue of the *Militant*. He liked what he read and called the paper’s office in New York to invite members of the SWP to come back to visit and talk some more.

His mother explained that she used to work at Walmart, and had a fight with the bosses to try to keep her job when she got sick. “I had to fight Walmart to get unemployment, when they tried to prevent me from getting it,” she said. “I won.”

They subscribed to the *Militant* and got two books, *Teamster Rebellion* and



Workers from Sahuarita Unified School District in “copper triangle” in southeast Arizona gather at state Capitol. Those who couldn’t get to Phoenix rallied in cities across the state.

“We are providing breakfast and lunch in the schools,” said Katie Wood, a sixth-grade teacher from Flagstaff, who traveled here to rally

outside the Capitol. “We are making history! A lot of us thought there was nothing we could do about the situation, but we are doing it.”



Militant/Chris Hoepfner

Ryan Spiker, right, a pipe welder, decided to get *Militant* subscription when Ned Measel, left, and Derrick Conaway knocked on his door in New Hill, West Virginia, April 30.

and get together again. Malcolm Jarrett, a supporter of the party from Pittsburgh, who had joined the team and an earlier one during the teachers’ protests in Oklahoma, decided to order a weekly bundle of the *Militant*.



Participants in 50,000-strong rally in Phoenix April 26.

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North Carolina Association of Educators has called for statewide action at state Capitol in Raleigh May 16. Join the protest!



# Nicaraguan workers protest social security cuts, censorship

BY SETH GALINSKY

After five days of protests by tens of thousands of students, workers and others across the country, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega revoked his April 16 directive to raise social security payroll taxes and cut benefits.

But even after the reversal of the anti-working-class measures protests continued, condemning the killing of some 40 participants in previous actions. Protest leaders say most were killed by the police or by pro-government thugs. Two police were killed during the clashes. Ortega also deployed soldiers around government buildings and shut down five television stations for reporting on the protests.

On April 23, the day after Ortega reversed the directive, tens of thousands joined a Managua protest initiated by COSEP, the main organization of capitalist business owners, calling for an end to violence and the initiation of a “dialogue.” This time the police and thugs stayed away. The government has agreed to the dialogue.

Dozens of stores and commercial centers — including a dozen of Walmart’s 100 Nicaragua locations — were looted during the protests. Ortega and Vice President Rosario Murillo, who is also his wife, seized on the looting to claim protesters were being manipulated by criminals and opposition political parties.

“We have to re-establish order,” Ortega said. “We cannot allow groups to impose chaos, crime and looting.” Murillo blamed the protesters for the violence. “Encouraging,

stimulating, provoking, disturbing tranquility,” she said, “is a sin.”

## Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution

Ortega and Murillo lead the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), but this has little but the name in common with the party that led workers and peasants in Nicaragua in July 1979 to overthrow the U.S. backed-dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza.

Along with the revolution in Grenada earlier that year, Fidel Castro said in 1980, there were now “three giants rising up to defend their independence, sovereignty, and justice, on the very threshold of imperialism.”

Worried that the example could inspire others in Latin America and around the world, Washington organized counterrevolutionary groups that waged an eight-year contra war that left 30,000 dead and sabotaged economic development.

The Nicaraguan people defeated the contras. But instead of using that victory to organize workers and peasants to move forward, to take more control of production and to give more land to the peasants, the FSLN leadership rejected following the example of the Cuban Revolution. Instead of deepening the revolution, the FSLN abandoned its historic program. Ortega and the other leaders transformed the organization into a bourgeois electoral party, increasingly divorced from the interests of workers and farmers.

This course led to the party losing the 1990 presidential election to Violeta Chamorro, a recognition that the revolution was no more.

## Ortega’s alliance with capitalists

In 2006, Ortega won the presidential election, but not based on a program to advance the interests of working people. He then forged an alliance with COSEP and with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, both of which had opposed every advance of the Sandinista revolution after Somoza’s overthrow.

Ortega was re-elected in 2011 and again in 2016, this time with Murillo as his vice president.

The attack on social security was first proposed by the International Monetary Fund, which had been collaborating

## Conference on challenges facing labor held in Havana



Photos by Lourdes Ortega, History Institute of Cuba



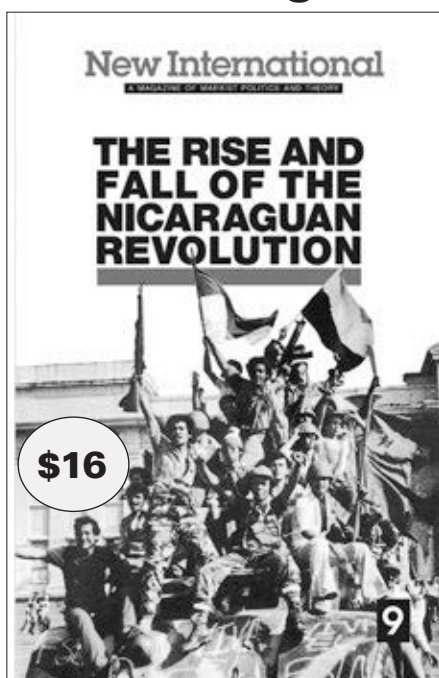
HAVANA — Among the events here in the days surrounding the massive working-class mobilization on May Day was a conference addressing challenges facing workers and the unions in Cuba and the world. Plenary sessions and panels took up topics ranging from women and the labor movement, to the political lives of well-known working-class leaders in Cuba’s history.

“In defense of the U.S. working class,” a talk by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, was featured on the final day of the April 24-26 gathering. It was followed by a panel of five workers and farmers from the U.S. who explained the conditions of work in various industries and focused on the topic, “From Clinton to Trump: How working people in the U.S. are responding to the anti-labor offensive of the bosses, their parties, and their government.”

Teachers, researchers in labor history, and trade unionists from Cuba, the Americas and Europe participated in the conference, which was organized by the History Institute of Cuba (IHC) and the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the country’s trade union federation. Pictured above, from left, are René González Barrios, president of the IHC (at podium); Cuban Deputy Minister of Communications Ana Julia Marine; CTC General Secretary Ulises Guilarte; and Consuelo Baeza, member of the CTC national secretariat. Fuller coverage will appear in a coming issue.

— MARTÍN KOPPEL

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with the Ortega government for years to improve conditions for local and foreign capitalists. The government has recently increased sales taxes and cut subsidies for electricity.

The attacks on protesters by police and FSLN-organized thugs ignited simmering anger at government policies that favor the bosses at the expense of the working class, attempts to censor the press and social media and widespread corruption.

“The social security move was the drop of water that made the glass overflow,” Javier Calero, a software technician in Managua, told the *Militant* by phone April 27. “Every month prices are going up 5 or 10 percent,

but our wages aren’t going up.”

Carrying Nicaraguan flags and hand-made signs against the attack on social security, protesters sang the national hymn, and shouted, “Free homeland or death,” a slogan that was popular during the revolution.

“The big problem here is that the whole political class is discredited,” Calero said. “There is not a single political party that has people’s confidence.”

The newly formed April 19 Student Movement has called for the firing of all police commanders responsible for the attacks on the demonstrations, for freedom of speech, for a revamped electoral council, for early elections and for a “state of law.”

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# Workers are starting to act up. Join in!

## Continued from front page

economic contraction and attacks by the capitalist rulers and their political parties in Congress and state legislatures, workers are saying, “Enough!” They are setting an example of how to fight, not just for themselves, but for the working class as a whole, and how to do so effectively.

The capitalist class tries to convince us that “education is about ensuring that *your* family’s children have the best shot at getting ahead in the lifetime struggle of each against all,” Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, points out in the introduction to the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

Barnes approaches education from the opposite perspective, a working-class point of view. He says it has to be looked at as a “*social* question. As the fight for the transformation of learning into a *universal* and *lifetime* activity.”

The pamphlet presents this fight as part of preparing workers and farmers “for the greatest of all battles in the years ahead — the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society, as we collectively educate ourselves and learn the exploiters in the process.”

The only way to move forward is to organize independently of the capitalist politicians, Democrats and Republicans alike. We can only rely on ourselves and our fellow workers.

The ruling class doesn’t need workers to be educated. This helps explain why funds for schools are at the bottom of their priorities. They want workers who are obedient. Despite the best efforts of teach-

ers, Barnes points out, “schools under capitalism are not institutions of learning but of social control, aimed at reproducing the class relations and privileges of the prevailing order.”

In West Virginia and Arizona teachers say with pride that students have learned more from the walk-outs, the mobilizations, the discussions and organization than anything they get in the classroom.

The Cuban Revolution is a living example that something different is possible. Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement viewed learning as a *social* question, a requirement to advance the revolution. One of the first great accomplishments of the revolution — in fact one they began when they were still in the mountains fighting to topple the Batista dictatorship — was the massive literacy campaign of 1961.

Some 100,000 young students from the cities volunteered to live with peasant families in the countryside and teach them to read and write. Literacy — and culture — are crucial for workers and farmers to wield political power. Both the students and the Cuban people were transformed by the revolution and the campaign. The dog-eat-dog morality of capitalism was dealt a powerful blow.

No one can predict how long the teachers’ uprising will last or how far it will spread. Teachers in North Carolina are planning a statewide mobilization May 16. Join members of the Socialist Workers Party to go and take part. Help get out the *Militant*, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, and deepen the discussion on how the working class can make progress.

Things have changed!

# ‘No deportations!’

## Continued from front page

One of the largest actions this year was a march of 3,000 in Waukesha, Wisconsin, a city near Milwaukee. Buses bringing protesters converged there from across the state.

Voces de La Frontera (Border Voices), which organized the action, picked Waukesha because County Sheriff Eric Severson has signed a 287(g) agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Under this program, local police are trained and authorized to act as immigration cops. The program facilitates the deportation of workers stopped by the cops, including for minor traffic violations.

Voces de la Frontera organized demonstrations of tens of thousands in 2017 against implementation of 287(g) in Milwaukee. Their actions helped lead to the resignation of notorious Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke and successfully blocked the program there. According to Channel 7 News, only two police departments in the Midwest have implemented the program.

## ‘We need to be treated as equals’

“I came today to fight for the rights of immigrants,” Oscar Basurto, originally from Mexico City, told the *Militant* at the Waukesha protest. “We want to live in freedom. We need driver’s licenses to go to work. We need to be treated as equals in the labor force.”

Members of the Socialist Workers Party joined the action, and others across the country, demanding amnesty for all immigrants and an immediate end to deportations, demands that are central to uniting the working class.

About 2,000 people marched in Los Angeles. Some had traveled to San Diego a few days before to welcome a caravan of Central Americans who traveled to the border to ask for asylum because of fear of gangs and violence in their home countries. The White House had pointed at the caravan as a reason to tighten border controls. As of May 2 immigration officials have allowed 74 to enter the U.S. and request asylum.

There were also May Day marches for immigrant rights in Oakland, California; Seattle; Chicago; New York; and other cities.

On the eve of the actions, a third federal court ruled to block the Donald Trump administration from rescinding the DACA program that protects “Dreamers” from deportation and grants them work permits.

President Trump issued an order Sept. 5, 2017, to phase out the program, saying he opposed its creation by executive order by then President Barack Obama. Trump said he wanted Congress to adopt the program.

The president tried to bargain for congressional approval for DACA in exchange for allocating money to extend the wall at the border. He was blocked each time by Democratic legislators.

Immigrants under 16 years old who arrived in the U.S. before Jan. 15, 2007, and graduated from high school or who were still studying, are eligible for relief under DACA. Nearly 700,000 youth have qualified.

U.S. District Judge John Bates gave the administration 90 days to convince him to change his ruling. Otherwise, he said, not only can the program not be ended, but the government will have to start accepting new applicants.

Meanwhile, seven state governments — in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, South Carolina, Texas and West Virginia — sued in federal court to “immediately rescind and cancel all DACA permits,” claiming they are unlawful.

The propertied U.S. ruling families depend on immigrants, especially those without U.S. documentation, as a source of superexploited labor. They seek to use them to push down the wages of all workers, the better to compete against capitalist rivals around the world and boost profits.

With the current uptick in production and hiring, labor is scarcer, and the bosses are not looking to reduce the flow of immigrant labor, but to keep immigrants in a second-class status in hopes they won’t fight for higher wages and better working conditions.

Combating the scapegoating of immigrants is a key battle to unite the working class.

Other workers took advantage of the May 1 International Workers Day to raise their demands. Some 300 nursing home workers, members of 1199SEIU, and their supporters marched in Trenton, New Jersey, demanding the bosses be required to hire more workers and increase staffing levels.

# Rap artist Meek Mill freed, US ‘justice’ exposed

## Continued from front page

role officer and in spite of the fact the charges she based her ruling on were dropped.

Thousands of workers and young people around the country took up the “Free Meek Mill” campaign, organizing protests, petitions and forums.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court said they ordered Mill released on bail because the credibility of the 2008 arresting cop has been seriously compromised, and prosecutors now support a new trial. Reginald Graham, the cop who arrested Mill in 2008, was the only witness against him at his trial. Last fall Graham’s name surfaced on a previously concealed list kept by the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office of some two dozen cops “with a history of lying, racial bias, or brutality.” And another cop who was present when Mill was arrested swore in an affidavit that Graham lied when he said Mill pointed a gun at him.

Mill has won broad support from artists and sports figures. Michael Rubin, an owner of the Philadelphia 76ers NBA team — Mill’s favorite basketball team — and actor Kevin Hart visited him in prison just hours before he was freed. Rubin had visited Mill earlier in April, along with Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots. Players Joel Embiid, Ben Simmons and Markelle Fultz also visited Mill, and sported their “Free Meek Mill” T-shirts in public.

After he was released, Mill joined Rubin, who had a helicopter waiting. They flew to a 76ers playoff game here. The Wells Fargo Arena announcer said, “Welcome home, Meek Mill!” over the loudspeaker. He was cheered by a sold-out crowd as he rang the pregame ceremonial bell wearing a

Joel Embiid jersey.

Mill’s release has been a big topic of discussion among workers here. “This is just awesome!” one Walmart worker told the *Militant*. Kevin Johnson, another Walmart worker, said, “With the release of Meek Mill, I hope that our justice system has to take a new approach on its probation system.”

About one-third of Pennsylvania’s 50,000 prisoners are workers on probation or parole who’ve been sent back to jail. In 2015 there were 183,000 people on probation here. The U.S. has the world’s highest incarceration rate — 22 percent of the world’s prison population, and disproportionately African-American.

“The specifics of Meek’s case inspired me to write this,” Mill supporter and performer Jay-Z wrote in an op-ed in the *New York Times* last fall. “But it’s time we highlight the random ways people trapped in the criminal justice system are punished every day. The system treats them as a danger to society, consistently monitors and follows them for any minor infraction — with the goal of putting them back in prison.”

After his release, Mill told NBC Nightly News, “I ain’t feel free since I caught this case at the age of 19; I’m 30 now.” He spoke about how he hoped his fight would help others still in prison.

“I got a lot of important people depending on me,” he said. “And I’m not talking about them people, public officials, I’m talking about the men that’s depending on me going through the same thing I’m going through.”

## For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

- For repeal of U.S. Jerusalem Embassy Act
- For workers’ solidarity in Israel, Palestine, the world over

### Socialist Workers Party statement

Download ready to print flyer at [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)



## ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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